

ICE BREAKERS



&



Teambuilding Exercises

Energize your next meeting!

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WHAT ARE ICEBREAKERS AND ENERGIZERS?

The Encyclopedia of Icebreakers (University Associates) says icebreakers "are tools that enable the group leader to foster interaction, stimulate creative thinking, challenge basic assumptions, illustrate new concepts, and introduce specific material." Therefore, icebreakers can be used any time a facilitator needs to form a group, begin a meeting, or help a group of individuals start a specific project.

Energizers are similar in nature and best used in the midst of a meeting, training, workshop, or other group learning experience.

Icebreakers

Used to introduce a meeting or an event

Energizers

Used at different points of a meeting or an event

MANAGING THE EXPERIENCE

Before Using Icebreakers: It is wise to consider a few basic elements before choosing and using icebreakers and energizers.

Ownership

First, icebreakers tend to work best when participants have taken ownership with their participation in the activity chosen by the trainer. There are five key elements providing participant ownership:

1. The explanation for the activity.
2. The goals of the activity.
3. The structure of the activity.
4. The capacity to ask questions.
5. The freewill to participate at their comfort level.

This last element is crucial and overlooked in many cases. An announcement at the beginning of an exercise is usually all that is needed to insure participants understand they are not "bound" to participate in every activity.

Many participants will not express their concerns to facilitator. Keep in mind any training activity could place stress and anxiety on people for many reasons. Some people are shy. Others just don't like doing team activities or may be having a "bad day." No matter the reason, understand there will be people who will not participate. Have an alternative plan just in case.

For those who opt out, perhaps ask them to be "observers" and see if they are comfortable providing a debriefing at the end of the event. Provide them something constructive to do during the exercise. When given the freewill to choose, people will take greater ownership of their participation.

To increase a greater level of participation, you might consider saying participants have the right to "pass" at any point of the exercise.

Set the Climate

Icebreakers set the climate for the event to proceed. With this understanding it makes sense to choose an icebreaker that is in alignment or consistent with the meeting climate. An icebreaker or energizer out of alignment could send a different message. The unintended message could send the meeting in a different direction. So it makes sense to spend the time to carefully choose the proper icebreaker.

Length

Some of the icebreakers and energizers in this book are for short programs, while others are better suited for much longer programs. As a general guideline, an icebreaker that lasts longer than 1/16th of the total time for a program is too long. There are exceptions, particularly if the objectives of the exercise are critical to the entire program.

Learning Objectives

Some trainers and facilitators prefer using icebreakers and energizers containing learning objectives related to the meeting, training program, or goal of the group. Others prefer using icebreakers unrelated to the learning objectives. However, each icebreaker is dynamic and has both intended and unintended objectives. Considering this prior to the event will help you optimize ownership and manage the educational benefits your people will experience.

Process Debriefing

At the end of the icebreaker and energizer, you might consider debriefing the exercise. By asking a series of questions, your people will be better able to process the experience and apply what they have learned to their lives.

Safety

The first rule--take no chances with safety. I recommend you avoid any activity that may jeopardize the safety of a participant.



QUICK AND EASY ICEBREAKERS

A Great Day for Hats!

Give each participant a donut-shaped piece of felt or other material approximately 18 inches in diameter. Tell participants to form some type of hat with the material. Participants should have enough time to make their hat. At the end of the exercise allow each person to explain the hat they created. You can also put people on teams and have some friendly competition between the groups on who can come up with the most creative hat.

Letters and Names

Give each person a few moments to think of an adjective starting with the same first letter in his or her first name (e.g. "Great Greg"). Begin by modeling it yourself. Then go around the group asking each person to state their name/adjective combination. During various points of the exercise, or at the end, ask volunteers to remember and repeat each of the names and adjectives volunteered so far. Provide prizes to those who do the best job.

This is Ridiculous

Ask participants to introduce themselves and then talk briefly about the most ridiculous thing they've done in their life.

The Napkin Game

Ask participants to form equal size groups. Give each group a napkin and ask them to fold the napkin as small as possible. However, it must be large enough for each member of the team to place their toe on the napkin. Allow the team to demonstrate.

The Multi-Colored Stone Exercise

Provide at least one small, multi-colored stone for everyone in the group. Put the group in a circle, sitting close enough to each other to hand stones to each other easily.

Provide these instructions to the group:
(See variations to the exercise on the next page)

"We have designed this exercise to help us get in touch with three important aspects of life. These aspects contribute to our success and relationship to ourselves, to others, and with a special place in the world."

"Everyone please select a stone from the basket I will pass around. We will each share with the group: 1) your name and mention what makes you unique, or a specific aspect of your life you would like to include (expressing right relationship with oneself); 2) a person, pet, or special relationship in our life (expressing right relationship with others); 3) a special place you have visited or would like to visit, and why (expressing right relationship with a special place in the world).

"I will begin, and when I have finished sharing, everyone should pass their stone to the person on their left and receive the stone from the person on their right. This is the process we will follow after every sharing. By the time we have finished the exercise, each person will have exchanged their stone and their stone touched by everyone else."

"You may keep your stone or give it back, you decide. You can keep it in your purse, pocket, or on your desk, to serve as a reminder of each person who shared and with whom you connected during the exercise; it can serve as a reminder of this workshop/session/training/experience and of all the things you will learn from it.

Begin the exercise:

"My name is etc."

(You may have to remind participants about the way to pass and receive stones after you share as the leader.)

VARIATIONS:

FOR CHURCH/RELIGIOUS GROUPS: You can substitute the three important aspects of life with 1) Our relationship with God; 2) Our relationship with family; and 3) Our relationship with others.

Relationships can be modified in a variety of ways: My name is, and my favorite place I visited is, and why; My name is, and I was born in (city, state, country, province); My name is, and my parents are/were (professions, careers); My name is, and the best pet I ever had is; My name is, and when I retire I am going to.

Relationships with people can also be expressed in other ways: My spouse/partner/children/grandchildren/ favorite friend is/are special because; What I value most in my friendships/co-worker relationships is; It is easier for me to forgive someone who has wronged me if...

It is helpful for your team members to express how they felt or process the exercise at the end.

Name the Person Group Ball Toss

Use this energizer during a multi-day/multi-hour training session. Good for a group of at 12-30 people. It can be used with groups of people who know each other or for getting acquainted.

Put the group together in a circle and have three tennis balls ready.

Facilitator tosses one ball to someone in the group whose name they know saying their name and then the other person's name (e.g. Jose to John). John (person who receives the ball) tosses it to someone whose name he knows (e.g. John to Mark). Mark tosses the ball to

someone whose name he knows and so on it goes, saying both names all the way around the circle. Toss the ball to each person only one time until everyone in the circle gets it at least once and all names have been said.

THEN the facilitator starts over, tossing the balls to the same person (Jose to John to Mark, etc.) only this time with two balls in succession (one after each other) saying the name twice. Toss the balls to the same people they were originally tossed to; first one ball, then the next, all the way around the circle stopping when they get back to the facilitator.

THEN, facilitator starts again, this time with all three balls. Saying names each time, toss all three balls in succession, in the same order until they get back to the facilitator.

By the time there are three balls going, it gets pretty chaotic and fun. By now all names have been said so many times everyone should have a pretty good idea of who's who and they are warmed up and ready to go. If someone drops a ball, simply give them a chance to chase it down and pick up where you left off--no need to start again.

Quick Meeting Icebreakers

Here are a few quick ideas to help people get focused and break the ice and ready to participate in the meeting. Go around the table (or circle) and complete one of these sentences:

Once upon a time I...

The most embarrassing time I had was...

The worst vacation I ever had was...

My ideal vacation is...

The riskiest thing I ever did was...

The best boss I ever worked for was...

The wildest thing I ever did (that I'll admit to) was...

These are easy to do; feel free to substitute in any way to suit the occasion.

This Is Me!

Creating an environment where it is safe for people to talk about who they are in a broader sense than might normally be socially acceptable.

GOAL: To learn about others in the group

SIZE OF GROUP: 5-25 people

Give participants 5-10 minutes to find an object that represents how they feel about themselves today, what they want to become, what their job feels like, or what they'd like to change in the world. Use alternatives as you wish.

Participants can either hold on to their object or put it on a table in the center of the room. Have each participant share with the group what the object means to them. You can either go in order or let someone volunteer first and then go in clock order.

Decide if you want the participants to stay in one room or to go outside to find their object. Just make sure you allow adequate time and not lose control of the group.

Before sending them to find their object, emphasize they don't have to find the "perfect" object, and to use their creativity in the association between the object and themselves.

ALTERNATIVE:

You can limit their search to what they have in their wallet, pockets, pocketbook, or on their person. Then participants introduce themselves and show the group the object they found and explain why that object is significant to who they are.

Introduce the Person Next To You

OBJECTIVES:

Learn about one other person and be able to introduce them to the entire group. All participants hear about their team members from the perspective of a third party. This helps relieve the anxiety of a person having to introduce themselves to the group. This also challenges participants to recall and adequately introduce the person they interviewed.

DESIGN:

Pair off the group and have the teams interview one another. After a certain amount of time, have each pair take a turn introducing the other to the audience. Time the interviews from two to five minutes.

COMMENTS:

You can prepare questions ahead of time or provide general guidelines for the interview. You should ask people to select someone to interview they don't already know.

Yep

This energizer exercise asks the participants to pass the word 'yep' and other words around a circle. This energizer is best used during the later stage of the training program or session.

TIME NEEDED: Approximately five to seven minutes

GROUP SIZE: Best suited for a group of 20 or fewer participants

SPACE REQUIRED: A room with flexible seating

1. The trainer asks the group members to sit in a circle.
2. When everyone is seated, the trainer explains the object of this game is for the participants, without laughing, to pass the word "yep" around the circle.
3. The trainer designates one participant to be the head of the circle. That person begins the game by saying "Yep."
4. The person sitting to his or her right must repeat the "Yep" and then say another "Yep." The third person must repeat the "Yeps," and then

give an additional "Yep." In this manner the "Yeps" continue around the circle.

The game ends when all of the participants have repeated the "Yeps" that have preceded them, and added their own "Yep."

VARIATIONS:

You can use another word in place of "Yep." For example: "Yuk" or "Tee Hee."

Toilet Paper Tango

PURPOSE:

Use for short introductions to lighten the atmosphere at the start of a difficult or intense kind of meeting.

MATERIAL:

One roll of toilet paper (If you "borrow" it from a hotel or office bathroom, make sure you replace it; otherwise, someone might be upset with you!)

INSTRUCTIONS:

Pass around a roll of toilet paper and say something like, "Just in case this meeting gets a little messy, everyone needs to take some" (With no other qualifiers or instruction). Then proceed with other business (agenda, objectives, minutes, housekeeping items, etc.) as the roll makes it way around the room.

Some folks by nature will take many squares of toilet paper and others just a few. Once everyone has had the roll, and you've finished other business, ask everyone to introduce themselves and share with the group as many "things" about themselves as number of "squares" they took. You can suggest the "things" be generic or make it work-related.

Have fun!

Truth or Consequences

OBJECTIVES:

To allow people to get to know and appreciate one another, through discovering both common and unique interests and experiences. Also, to help level the playing field within a group by making human connections that aren't related to either organizational or power structures.

- To help people begin to be more comfortable talking and listening with one another.
- To expose something unusual about themselves and their ideas to the group.

But most of all -- to have FUN!

PROCEDURE:

In groups of three to eight (depending on how much time you want to devote to this exercise), have individuals take turns making four statements about themselves -- three must be true; one is a lie.

After each individual makes their statements, the other people in the group discuss and try to decide which of the statements are true and which one is the lie.

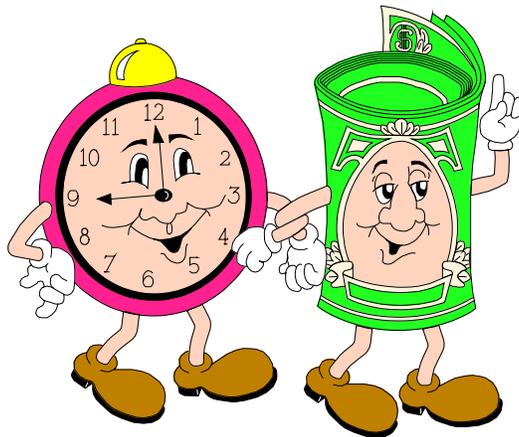
Once they come to consensus, the individual who made the statements not only tells which is the "lie" but also provides a bit more background about the "truths." Then ask the group what made them think the "lie" was a "truth."

A group of three can easily do this in less than 10 minutes. A group of eight can take from 20 to 30 minutes.

COMMENTS:

This game works well with groups that are both familiar and unfamiliar with each other. It is often surprising how relative strangers can instinctively pick up the nuances between truths and lies based on very little information.

The first person or two asked to make statements can find it pretty difficult, but after a couple of folks have taken a turn, others typically find it easier. One way to make the process run smoother is to alert a couple of people beforehand so they can begin thinking and be ready to volunteer. This type of "plant" can make it much easier for folks who come later because they won't see someone "struggle" and get "uptight" about their performance. Another way to minimize the difficulty is to begin with you.



Secret Agent

OBJECTIVE: To relax people

PROCEDURE:

- Ask a group of people to stand around randomly scattered in an open space.
- Have everyone select a secret agent as well as a bodyguard for themselves out of the group of people without telling anyone.
- After the selection, the people may move around; however, they must always keep the person they have chosen as bodyguard between themselves and their chosen secret agent.

TIME REQUIRED: 10-15 minutes

Roll the Dice

OBJECTIVES:

- To lighten the atmosphere
- To get to know each other

MATERIAL:

- Prepare dice with a different color on each side
- Prepare a series of trivia questions and/or sentence completions based on each color of the dice

PROCEDURE:

- Use a dice where each side has a different color, and stands for a certain question/sentence to be finished.
- Let participants roll the dice and answer the question according to the color rolled.

TIME REQUIRED:

Depends on the size of the group, approximately two to three minutes per person

Empty Chair

OBJECTIVES:

- To get to know each other
- To become comfortable talking about yourself in a group

PROCEDURE:

- Ask people to sit in a circle and think of a person/object/animal that is close to them. Now, using a little imagination, pretend that person/object/animal is going to introduce them to the group.
- Each person stands up, points to his/her chair, pretends to be the chosen person/object/animal, and begins to introduce themselves.

TIME REQUIRED: One to two minutes per person

Playing Card Introductions

OBJECTIVES:

- Warm-up exercise
- Networking

MATERIAL: A deck of cards

PROCEDURE:

- Give each person entering the room a card to keep, and ask them to find others with the same number.
- They should introduce themselves and sit together.
- During breaks ask everyone to look for others with the same suit or color, and introduce themselves, get to know each other better.
- Repeat the process until everyone has met everyone in the group.

TIME REQUIRED: 10 minutes

\$100,000 Exercise

OBJECTIVES:

- To provide a break during a lengthy meeting
- To lighten up the atmosphere

MATERIALS:

- \$100,000 candy bar(s)
- Index cards or yellow post-its with "Grand Prize Winner" written on them

PROCEDURE:

- Before the meeting starts, tape to the bottom of a random chair an index card or paper announcing Grand Prize Winner.
- You may have as many as you want, based on the size of the group.
- About halfway through the meeting, have the participants stand and stretch.
- While the group is standing, tell them they are participating in a contest with a "\$100,000" grand prize.
- Advise them to check the bottom of their seat to discover if they are a winner. Present the "\$100,000" candy bar(s) to the winners.

TIME REQUIRED: Two to eight minutes

Want Ads

OBJECTIVE:

- To get to know individuals in a team building or other type session
- Look for commonalities, comment on diversity or other ties to the content of the session

MATERIAL:

- Want Ad forms
- Tape
- Box or envelop to collect want ads
- Scissors

PROCEDURE:

- Create a form containing some of the following “fill in the blank” statements. Make it look like a want ad or wanted poster.
- Hand out at the beginning a day-long session or as pre-work for participants to bring with them. They should not put their names on the want ad.
- Have a location where the want ads can be collected anonymously. The facilitator can then post the want ads on a wall with assigned numbers and have everyone try to match the person to the want ad.

WANTED FOR

Always being _____(fill in)
Having strong needs for _____(fill in)
Greatly valuing _____(fill in)
Living by the slogan _____(fill in)

You may add additional statements appropriate for the group.

Ask individuals to bring their picture (baby, dressed up in costume, etc); put those on Wanted Posters, and have people match pictures to attendees.

Choose Your Color

OBJECTIVE:

Encourage people to interact with one another. You find out some neat things about people you normally would not know.

PROCEDURE:

- Have each group/team member tell what color they would be, and why.
- Gain insight into people's likes, dislikes, and personality.

TIME REQUIRED: One minute per person in the group

Introduction

OBJECTIVE:

- To create unity among the group and promote partnering relationships.
- This exercise will minimize the tendency to speak about one's self for long periods of time.

MATERIAL: Paper tablet, pen, or pencil

PROCEDURE:

- The facilitator will have the group separate into pairs.
- Each pair will interview the other about interest in today's meeting, occupation or position, family members, goals, or other items of interest that may bring them closer together.
- After the interviews, each person in the group will introduce the person interviewed and tell what they have learned about the person.

TIME REQUIRED: 15 minutes

The Worst Automobile I Ever Owned

OBJECTIVE:

To help everyone relax, have fun, and get to know each other on a different level.

PROCEDURE:

- The facilitator should relate an experience he/she had with a terrible car they once owned.
- Then allow each person to introduce themselves to the group and tell their own horror story about a car they owned.
- Allow group to vote on the worst experience.

TIME REQUIRED: Five to ten minutes

Radio Talk Show

OBJECTIVE:

- To energize a meeting
- Provide a different twist and generate discussion on normally routine agenda items normally overlooked or ignored

MATERIAL:

- Trinkets and inexpensive items for prizes - candy bars, stress-relieving foam squeeze balls, glow-in-dark necklaces, Oriental Trading Co. type items
- Obtain a toy or real microphone (and the radio voice to accompany) to complete the exercise



PROCEDURE:

- Conduct your meeting like a radio talk show (complete with a radio talk show voice). The "callers" are the managers or directors who have an agenda item to present. Take short "commercial breaks" between agenda items at which time the facilitator awards prizes to those in attendance.

TIME REQUIRED: 30-60 minutes

Favorite Things

OBJECTIVE:

- To introduce yourself in a different way
- To break the ice

MATERIAL: Paper and pen

PROCEDURE:

- Before the meeting starts, ask each participant to think of or write down a description of themselves as a favorite food, car, color, and activity.
- Have each one introduce themselves with their name and the above information.

TIME REQUIRED: Five minutes



Your Worst/First Job

Go around the room and ask each person to tell what they did for his/her first or worst job. You could do it ahead of time and ask meeting attendees to fill out a card. The facilitator could read them aloud and everyone guess which employee had that particular job.

OBJECTIVE:

To learn something new about your colleagues
To spark conversation between employees who do not normally work together

Interesting Introductions

OBJECTIVE:

To introduce class participants in a comfortable and interesting way

Have participants pair up with someone they don't know and introduce each other to the group. A real benefit is the networking opportunity. Participants are more comfortable introducing someone other than themselves (they say the name louder and clearer, too, which benefits everyone).

Add an item they must discover and report on as part of the introduction.

Some of these add-ons include: One thing the interviewer and interviewee have in common, the most interesting place they have ever traveled, or the biggest challenge they have faced (related to our topic).

SOURCE: Lee R. Bailey, Dead River Company

Remember My Name

This works best in a larger group. Each person must introduce himself or herself by using a descriptive word that begins with the same sound as their first name. For example, my name is Kathy so I could say,

"Hi, I'm Curious Kathy." The next person would introduce himself or herself and then me. Ben is sitting next to me and Sherri is sitting next to Ben. Ben would say, "This is Curious Kathy and I am Benevolent Ben." Sherri would say, "This is Curious Kathy, Benevolent Ben, and I am Sensual Sherri." This continues until everyone has been introduced. It is fun to have the boss or manager go last so they have to repeat everyone's name.

OBJECTIVE:

Establish an easy, fun way to get to know and remember everyone's name.

SOURCE: Kathy Worley, Ogden Clinic

Personal Emblems

OBJECTIVE:

Give participants the opportunity to describe qualities about themselves, and learn more about other attendees.

MATERIALS:

Flipchart/whiteboard/individual pieces of paper



PROCEDURE:

Reproduce an emblem in the shape of a shield. Divide it in to five quadrants.

In space 1, draw something that characterizes a recent "Peak Performance."

In space 2, sketch something about yourself very few people know.

In space 3, draw a symbol of how you like to spend your spare time.

In space 4, fill in something you are very good at.

In space 5, write or draw something that epitomizes your personal motto.

After each person is finished, form triads (preferably of attendees who do not know each other), and try to identify what the others' Coat of Arms signifies.

Ask for several participants to describe their emblem to the group.

TIME REQUIRED: 15-20 minutes

Team Crests

This is similar to the Personal Emblems on the preceding page, but this exercise is done as teams.

OBJECTIVE:

To give team members the opportunity to bond as team members and describe the unique skills the team brings.

MATERIAL: Flip chart or butcher paper

BACKGROUND:

All military organizations have a unit crest representing the organization to which they belong. The unit crest looks like a shield and contains symbols representing the history of the organization.

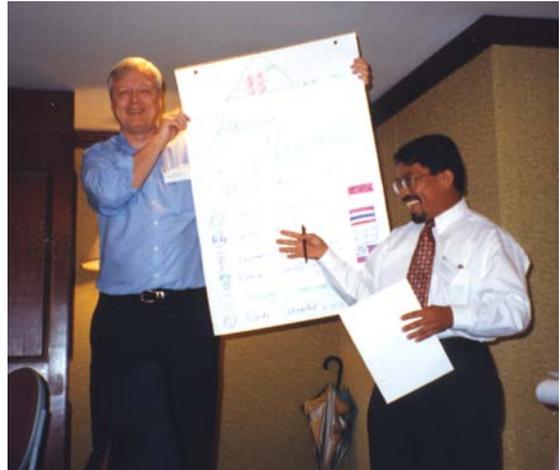
PROCEDURE:

Reproduce a crest in the shape of a shield. Divide it in to five quadrants.

In space 1, write the "team name."

In space 2, write the "team logo."

In space 3, write a song that represents the team (Team members can actually sing the song during the presentation).



In space 4, write or draw something that epitomizes the team's motto.

In space 5 at the bottom of the paper, have each team member list the one strength they bring to the team.

When finished, have each team make a presentation discussing each item on their crest. Ask teams to vote for the best crest and presentation.

TIME REQUIRED: 15-20 minutes

CREATIVE BRAINSTORMING ACTIVITIES

Dollar Exchange Idea

OBJECTIVE:

To encourage a climate for open exchange of ideas among participants

MATERIAL:

- Play money
- Box or bowl

PROCEDURE:

- Give each participant several pieces of play money.
- Let the group know you are looking for specific ideas or suggestions on _____.
- Let them write an idea or suggestion on the back of the bill and either circulate the bills or post them in a conspicuous place where members may inspect them.
- Discuss what factors encourage us or prevent us from sharing ideas with others.

TIME REQUIRED: Five to ten minutes

A Bag Full of Money

OBJECTIVE:

To allow the group to do creative thinking without fiscal restraints

MATERIAL:

- Paper or yellow Post-It notes
- Pens or pencils

PROCEDURE:

- Introduce the scenario that an unknown person just dropped off a bag containing \$1,000,000, which can only be spent on items, tools, or equipment to improve the organization.
- Form groups and let them write down their wish list for the organization and figure the approximate costs.
- Prioritize the list.
- Discuss the results.

TIME REQUIRED: 10-15 minutes

Story Boards

OBJECTIVE:

- Brainstorming tool to produce ideas on a particular issue
- Technique to resolve problems, generate ideas, planning

MATERIAL:

:

- Flipchart
- Corkboard
- Thumbtacks
- Stacks of 5 by 8 inch cards

PROCEDURE:

- The facilitator presents a problem; the participants state potential solutions on the cards, which are pinned across the cardboard.
- The facilitator asks idea generating questions about each printed category and the participants list their responses on cards.
- These are grouped and pinned under the appropriate category by the facilitator.
- Participants review the ideas in each category and rank them.

TIME REQUIRED: 20-30 minutes

The World's Best Place to Work

OBJECTIVES:

- To help participants to begin thinking and interacting as a group
- To illustrate when a person thinks they have nothing more to offer, when stretched, the best work or best ideas come out

MATERIAL:

- Markers
- Poster paper
- Whiteboards
- Yellow Post-It notes

PROCEDURE:

Divide attendees into manageable groups of three to six people. Each group is given a poster and some yellow Post-It notes. Also, each team selects a recorder to capture the team's ideas on the poster.

When the signal is given, the participants get two minutes to write down everything they would include in the "World's Best Place to Work." After two minutes, the groups are told to stop and instructed to draw a line under all of the ideas that have been captured on the poster.

Then the groups are told they are going to be given one additional minute to create even more ideas regarding what they would include in the World's Best Place to Work.

After this minute has passed, the groups are told to stop and draw a line under what has been written during the second brainstorm. They are given yet another minute to list their attributes for the World's Best Place to Work.

Go about the room picking out some of the more interesting or unusual ideas to read aloud to the rest of the participants.

Frequently, a group has a funny entry or two on their poster and will share a quick quip about their idea and how they came up with it. If

the groups don't offer, encourage them and give the opportunity to share.

RESULTS:

Often some of the best ideas come in the second and third sessions. Teams learn when they have exhausted most of the run of the mill ideas, they must begin thinking outside the box.

TIME REQUIRED: 15-20 minutes

The Car

OBJECTIVE:

Get to know people in the organization and understand each other's particular role and responsibilities.

PROCEDURE:

The facilitator asks each attendee to describe their organization/department/team in terms of a "car" and their role in the organization in terms of a particular part in the car.

SUBSTITUTIONS:

Instead of a car, you may use any type of vehicle ~ airplane, tank, etc.

TIME REQUIRED:

Depending on the group size, five to ten minutes

ICEBREAKERS ON COMMUNICATION

Listener/Instructor

OBJECTIVE:

To demonstrate the difficulty in communicating clearly with someone who cannot see what you are doing

MATERIAL:

- Cardboard divider
- Building toys

PROCEDURE:

- Ask participants to volunteer who feel they are good listeners or good instructors.
- Pick one from each group for demonstration.
- Seat them so they cannot see each other, but are in view of the group, e.g. placing a cardboard divider in between them.
- Give each person an identical set of building toys and ask the good instructor to tell the good listener how to build something by describing the pieces and their assembly.
- Compare both buildings.

TIME REQUIRED: Five to ten minutes

SOURCE: Ed Brucek, Pliant Corporation

The Paper and Communication Exercise

OBJECTIVE:

Communication and following instructions

MATERIAL:

Blank 8 ½-by-11-inch sheets of paper for each participant

PROCEDURE:

Tell the participants: "We are going to conduct an exercise to show some important things about communication. Pick up your sheet of paper and hold it in front of you. Now, close your eyes and follow the directions I will give you—and no peeking!" Participants cannot ask questions.

Give the following directions, carrying them out yourself with your own sheet of paper. Pause after each instruction to give the group time to comply.

"Please follow my instructions. The first thing I want you to do is fold your sheet of paper in half.

Tear off the upper right-hand corner.

Fold it in half again and tear off the upper left hand corner of the sheet.

Fold it in half again. Now tear off the lower right-hand corner of the sheet."

After the exercise is complete, say to the participants, "Now open your eyes, and let's examine what we did. If I did a good job of communicating and you did a good job of listening, all of our sheets should look exactly the same!"

Now, hold your sheet up for them to see. It is highly unlikely any sheet will match yours.

Look at all the differences. There will probably be much laughter.

Ask the group why no one's paper matched yours. You will probably get responses like "You didn't let us ask questions!" or "Your directions could be interpreted in different ways." Then, lead into a discussion on the need for two-way communication in the workplace.

TIME REQUIRED: Five to ten minutes

Balloon Game

OBJECTIVE:

To produce as many balloons as possible as a team

MATERIAL:

- Balloons of various colors (use medium size balloons)
- Pin (to pop rejected balloons)
- Prize for winning team -- optional (I usually pass around treats to everyone as we discuss what occurred and how that applies to our working environment/position in the company.)

PROCEDURE:

- Your team will produce balloons for your approval.
- You will be guided by the following criteria for the acceptance or rejection of each balloon submitted.
- You may accept balloons only if all of the following standards are met.
- You may not share these standards with your team nor may you answer any questions.

1) Hand the inflated balloons one at a time to the members of the team.

2) Production team members use only their left hands to give the balloons to you.

3) No production team member may submit two balloons in a row. You will take a balloon only from a team member different from the last person who handed you one.

4) You accept only a balloon that is a different color than the last one handed to you.

If balloons do not meet all the above conditions, you must reject the balloon by immediately popping it. Remember -- no talking or explanations of any kind are permitted.

Accepted balloons are held in the air until the scorekeeper counts them, and then they may be lowered

Directions (for acceptance) are to be given to the chosen/appointed leader for each group.

OPTION: You may take the leaders out in the hall for a few minutes to answer questions and allow teams to open their balloon packages and organize their balloons as desired. The teams get no instructions except they are to inflate, tie, and present the balloons to their leader, and try to get as many balloons accepted as possible.

TIME REQUIRED: 15-20 minutes



PROBLEM SOLVING EXERCISES

Managing Change

OBJECTIVE:

To provide participants with an opportunity to analyze the change process and decide how to make future changes more readily acceptable

PROCEDURE:

Form groups of four to five people from different organizations/divisions.

Ask them to discuss the following with their group members:

1. A recent situation in which some type of change was introduced
2. Was this change resisted?
3. Why or why not?
4. What could have been done to make the change easier?

Ask one representative from each group to present the findings from their discussion.

TIME REQUIRED: 20-30 minutes

Reverse Brainstorming

OBJECTIVE:

To determine the weaknesses of an idea and/or anticipate problems that may arise once the idea is implemented

PROCEDURE:

- The facilitator introduces brainstorming rules and ideas.
- The participants review the ideas and suggest criticisms/weaknesses as well as solutions on how to best overcome them.
- Participants select the idea with the fewest weaknesses and greatest likelihood to solve the problem.

TIME REQUIRED: 20-30 minutes

Gordon/Little Group Technique

OBJECTIVE:

- To generate ideas and to redefine problems
- Provides problem abstraction until a sufficient number of ideas are generated

PROCEDURE:

- The facilitator provides the group with an abstract problem statement (e.g. Why do people have allegiance to their companies?)
- As the group generates ideas, the facilitator provides more concrete problem statements (e.g. How do we attract and retain special care nurses?)
- The facilitator introduces the problem statement. Participants move forward with new ideas or regenerate previous ones.

TIME REQUIRED: 20-30 minutes

SOURCE: Taylor, J.W. How to Create Ideas. Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice Hall, 1967.

Advantages/Disadvantages

The Advantages/Disadvantages table is an idea selection tool. The "Table" is used by many organizations to determine if certain alternatives meet corporate objectives. Many of us have been confronted with ideas on alternatives where quick analysis was necessary. Typically the manager or staff (group method) constructs the Advantages/Disadvantages Table to examine the strengths and weaknesses (pros/cons) of various alternatives, and selects the "one" that fulfills a predetermined objective.

The steps in constructing the Advantages/Disadvantages Table are as follows:

1. For each alternative, construct a table containing three columns.

2. Label column one, Criteria; column two, Advantages; and column three, Disadvantages.
3. List all relevant criteria associated with the alternatives.
4. Place a checkmark in the Advantages or Disadvantages column for each criterion.
5. Repeat steps 3 and 4 until all alternatives are exhausted.
6. Select the alternative receiving the most checks under the Advantages column.

SOURCE: VanGundy, Arthur B. Techniques of Structured Problem Solving. Second Edition. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1988.

Implementing Ideas Consensus Mapping

Consensus Mapping is an implementation tool developed by Hart, Boroush and Hornick that assists participants in analyzing, organizing, and visualizing ideas that are interrelated and sequence dependent. In order to accomplish this, participants construct a graphic map that illustrates how clusters of ideas are interrelated.

Participating in the Consensus Mapping technique involves the following:

1. The facilitator divides participants into two to four working groups of five to nine members.
2. Working groups attempt to identify clusters and idea categories.
3. Participants develop a "straw man map." Staff members collect all schemes developed by the various groups and transfer the results on to one map. This new map is then presented to the entire group for discussion.
4. Map reconfiguration. The working groups study the straw man map and use it to develop custom-made maps. (Note: Yellow sticky notes are good to have on hand; participants may write ideas on them and place them at various locations on the map).
5. The working groups reconvene and a spokesperson for each working group outlines the revised map to all participants. Group discussion follows.
6. Map consolidation. Participants incorporate the best features from all maps previously drawn to produce the final map.

REFERENCES: Hart, S., Boroush, M., Enk, G. and Hornick, W. "Managing Complexity Through Consensus Mapping Technology for the Structuring of Group Decisions" Academy of Management Review, Vol. 1 | Num 3 1985

Nominal Group Technique

Andre Delbecq and Andrew Van de Veni developed the Nominal Group Technique. It incorporates the creative problem solving processes of idea generation, selection, and prioritization. It also includes the creative thinking methods of brainwriting and brainstorming to generate Ideas. The Nominal Group Technique is one of the more popular group problem solving techniques, and provides for group input on decision making for a number of ideas without sacrificing problem solving control to a few members of the group. Consequently, all group members have an equal vote and contribute to the problem solving process.

The Nominal Group Technique process begins when a facilitator with the assistance of the group, identifies a well-defined problem statement. Participants record their ideas and read each one without discussion. During this phase, the facilitator or a staff member records each idea on a flipchart. If there are duplicate ideas, they are discarded. Variations of previously recorded ideas are written on the flip chart and are assigned a sequential number by the facilitator.

Once all ideas are recorded, group discussion begins. Each participant is allowed to comment on the ideas both positively and negatively. However, the facilitator should monitor two areas: first, if the idea originator is put on the defensive, intervention must take place; and second, time is a critical factor--the facilitator should allow each participant the same amount of time to comment.

The next process involves having participants note and prioritize ideas that have the most potential to solve the problem. The facilitator instructs each participant to vote on the importance of the ideas. Participants are provided with 3 by 5 cards to record the idea and the sequential idea number that was assigned (usually participants are given the choice of voting on five to nine ideas). While voting, each participant scores their ideas from "1" as their top choice to "9" (if nine ideas were selected). The idea receiving the lowest score is the preferred one while ideas receiving no votes are discarded.

All ideas receiving votes are recorded on the flip chart, discussed, and voted on, using the same procedure as previously discussed.

The Nominal Group Technique steps are as follows:

1. Facilitator presents a problem statement to the group participants.
2. Participants record their ideas on paper with no discussion.
3. Participants state their ideas, one idea per participant.
4. Participants discuss, clarify, and agree or disagree on each idea.
5. Facilitator records the ideas on a flip chart and assigns a sequential number to each.
6. Participants vote and rank their preferences for the best idea.
7. Facilitator records the ideas receiving votes and conducts a group discussion to clarify any inconsistencies.
8. Participants prioritize and vote on the remaining ideas, with the top idea recorded by the facilitator.



REFERENCES: Delbecq, A. L., and Van de Ven, A. H. "A Group Process Model for Problem Identification and Program Planning." *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, Vol. 7 J (1971), pp. 466-492

Roth, William F., Jr. 1985.

Osborn's Brainstorming

Alex Osborn, an advertising executive, developed Osborn's Brainstorming, also referred to as classical brainstorming, in the 1930s. This technique is often cited when individuals want to generate ideas or solutions about a particular issue. Many times during the early stages of a brainstorming session, participants become confrontational about ideas that will not work. We have all witnessed negative group behavior when no guidelines were established prior to a brainstorming session.

Osborn has provided two principles and four rules for successful brainstorming sessions. The first principle, "deferred judgment," is based on Osborn's research on creativity. He postulates that the human mind uses both judgmental and creative thinking when confronted with problem situations. In his view, an individual's frame of reference can often halt his/her creative capacities and prompt judgmental thinking to take over. Osborn advises individuals to defer judgment--to let creative thinking take over during problem situations. Judgment is not deferred indefinitely, but placed on hold while quality solutions are developed.

The second Osborn principle is "quantity breeds quality." According to this principle, the more ideas generated during a given session, the better chance there is a quality solution will be identified. The principle also supports the concept that ideas themselves serve as a breeding ground for new idea.

These principles provide the Brainstorming. They are as follows:

- No criticism is permitted. Ideas are not judged during the idea generation phase of problem solving. There is no discussion.
- Generate as many ideas as possible--the wilder the better-- whatever comes to mind. Freewheeling is encouraged.
- Quantity is desired. A large quantity of ideas generally yields quality solutions.
- Ideas breed ideas. Build upon a previously stated idea.

The steps for Osborn's Brainstorming are as follows:

1. The facilitator describes the problem.
2. Participants state one idea at a time.
3. The facilitator presents the four brainstorming rules and monitors the group process. (Note: The facilitator also intervenes if criticism is detected.)
4. A recorder writes all ideas on a flip chart so they can be further refined.

SOURCE: Osborn, Alex F. Applied Imagination. New York: 1963.

Color Dots

The Color Dot technique is a CPS process that selects and prioritizes ideas. We have used this technique numerous times in combination with the Crawford Slip Method and/or Osborn's Brainstorming. We have been encouraged by the positive comments received from various groups about its ability to select ideas and encourage maximum group participation. There are numerous versions of this technique, some of which use self-adhesive dots. According to our process, participants are provided colored dots rationed by number and point value. Each participant is then forced to score and prioritize only the most important ideas generated.

The steps of the Color Dot technique are as follows:

1. Once ideas have been generated and listed on a flip chart, the facilitator provides colored dots (sheets of self-adhesive dots) for the purpose of scoring listed ideas.
2. Depending on the number of generated ideas, participants receive colored dots, equal to 10 percent of the ideas generated. For example, if 300 ideas were generated, each member would receive 30 colored dots. (Note: The colored dots are assigned point values, e.g. red dots = five points, blue dots = three points, yellow dots = one point.) To further elaborate on the above example, out of the 30 dots, 80 percent are blue and yellow dots, and 20 percent are red.

3. Participants evaluate the ideas and stick a “weighted” color dot next to the preferred idea. Each idea is assigned one dot only.
4. The facilitator tabulates the scored ideas. The group further develops the ideas receiving the highest number of votes.

CASE STUDIES

Use these case studies for groups of people. Allow them to read the story and then identify the problems. Finally, have them identify the root cause to the problem.

These case studies will help people practice using problem-solving skills such as brainstorming, affinity diagrams, root cause analysis, and fish-bone diagrams.

Heartbreak Hotel

I visited my old pal, Drew, recently. He had taken over as general manager of Heartbreak Hotel. He wanted me to bring in a team of consultants and see how we could improve the hotel operation.

When I drove up to the front door, a steady rain kept me inside the car for 10-15 minutes. During that time I noticed the doorman was peering at me from inside the lobby. Sensing the rain was not going to quit, I made a dash for the doors and pushed my way in, dripping on the marble floor in the process. The doorman told me I could only leave the car there for 10 minutes since it was a no-parking zone, but the hotel garage in the next block would be glad to store it for me. He offered to lend me his umbrella in order to unload the trunk.

Accepting his offer, I retrieved my suitcase and bag and drug them both to the front desk. Announcing myself as Mr. Drew's guest didn't seem to make much of an impression on the clerk, who was chatting with the shuttle driver. She seemed a little irritated at my interference.

There was no reservation for me and they were having problems with a new software update on their registration system. Since I was a friend of Mr. Drew, they said they would "fix me up." I arrived at my room only to find the magnetic key did not work. After returning to the front desk, they told me the room probably wouldn't be ready for another hour or so. About that time I remembered my car.

It wasn't necessary to worry because the police had just towed the vehicle away. The doorman said that he had waved to the tow truck driver, but they had been unable to see him for the rain. He assured me I could pick up the car in the morning with no problem. A cab could take me to the police lot, and the fine was only \$55 plus the towing charge. He noted it was interesting how they could move a car like that without having the key.

I found Drew's office on the third floor. One of the elevators wasn't working so I took the brisk walk up the stairs. His administrative assistant suggested I move some magazines off the bench and sit down, as "Elmer" would be with me as soon as he got off the telephone. She went back to her book.

After a few minutes she seemed to notice my presence again and offered me some coffee from the percolator in the corner of the reception room. I accepted it with thanks, telling her I was still damp, having not been able to shower and change because the room was not prepared. She said I really shouldn't expect much else since, although the checkout time was noon, they didn't like to push their guests out on rainy days like this. And since the new software program wasn't working right, they didn't know who was registered anyway.

Drew finally appeared and greeted me. Now, he told me, I was going to see how a hotel should be run. He took me into his office, cleared some reports off a chair, and offered me a cigar. After remarking on my trip and how fortunate it was of him to catch me in an off moment, he asked how I liked the place so far.

I told him about my experience with the rain, doorman, clerk, computer system, and my car.

Then, straightening his tie, rolling down his sleeves, and putting on his jacket, he took me on a tour of the hotel.

In the housekeepers' room, nine people were involved in a discussion with the supervisor about their assignments. Those on the lower floors had to wait until the vacuum cleaners were available from the upper floors. Drew suggested they vacuum every other day; then they could share the machines on a rotating basis. The housekeepers' thought that was a great idea, although the supervisor didn't seem too pleased.

Drew remarked to me about the lack of decision-making authority of some of his supervisors. He sighed he had to make more and more of the decisions each day because his staff seemed reluctant to take the initiative.

We met the bell captain and three of the assistants in their locker room discussing, with the doorman, the procedure for getting guests' bags from the front door to the desk. The problem was in splitting the tips, which were getting a little lower each day. Elmer listened judiciously and then suggested all the tips be given to the bell captain, who would distribute them on the basis of effort, as he saw it. This didn't make anyone happy except the bell captain.

We toured many of the floors; I mentioned the amount of room service trays that seemed to be sitting in the hall. Drew said this was a normal part of the hotel scene. The guests didn't complain because it reminded them room service was available.

OUTBRIEFING:

1. What was the problem with the restaurant?
2. What was the root cause of the problems in the hotel?
3. If you were a management consultant, what steps would you take to improve operations?

What Good Managers Must Do

How would you handle these situations?

"Dear John"

You have been working with John for over a year. He has been a dependable and reliable salesperson. Everyone, including customers, likes him and trusts him.

Today he comes to you and says he has a better job offer somewhere else.

How would you handle the situation?

Could there have been something done to prevent this?

"Pain, Gain, or Promotion Opportunity"

Mary and Michael have been your best producers. Both of them have been with you about the same amount of time. You have a new supervisory position to fill and you decide to pick Mary for the promotion. It was a tough decision, but Mary's performance was a little better than Michael's. How will you explain this to Michael?

How would you handle the situation?

Could there have been something done to prepare them ahead of time?

"Turn-a-Round Time"

You are a new manager and you have just taken over responsibility for a department. The people in this department have been there a long time, and the morale and productivity are just so-so. You were selected for this job because you can turn things around. What is your plan for the next 30 days to turn around this operation?

How would you handle the situation?

Could there have been something done to prevent this?

"Stop the Tyrant"

You are a manager of a small department. Your employees trust and look up to you. Your new boss is a micro-manager and has a direct, sometimes confrontational management style. She sometimes goes around your back directly to your staff to get answers and give directions. She recently created a new program requiring your team to work overtime to get it completed without telling you about it.

How would you handle the situation?

Could there have been something done to prepare them ahead of time?

"Backstabbing"

An employee comes to you saying other employees in the same office are talking about her behind her back. This has been going on for

quite a while and she is quite disturbed about it. She adds if something doesn't change, she is going to file a complaint.

How would you handle the situation?

Could there have been something done to prepare them ahead of time?

BOHICA Airline Company

BOHICA Airline Company celebrated their 70th anniversary this year. During those 70 years a lot of things have changed. Once a shining star in their industry, now the shine seems to be fading.

They still have the same vision statement and guiding values. The management style has pretty much stayed the same. They are a top-down traditional organization, locked into a rigid structure resistant to change.

Over the years the demographics of the workforce has varied. There are many younger people working there. They have new ideas and different expectations. They were growing increasingly frustrated with the organizational culture.

Customer expectations are changing to. Passengers are increasingly sensitive to low-fares. A large portion of market share was going to lower priced competitors.

George, the human resource manager of BOHICA, got another call to report to the CEO. This was the second time this month he had been called on the carpet to explain why they lost 20 more people to a competing company. George's only excuse was, "The competition is paying more than we are." George knew on the inside what the real reasons were, but did not say them out loud. He tried to tell the CEO a couple of years ago when the economic downturn first started, but he didn't listen then, so why try now.

BOHICA was having a tough time. During the past two years they laid off 40% of the workforce, outsourced their maintenance to contractors, and cut out all overtime. Employees complained they were working the jobs of two people and making less money. Morale was in the pits and on-time take off ratings were dropping fast. In a conference room someone scribbled on a board what BOHICA really stood for, "Bend Over Here It Comes Again." It was supposed to be a joke, but no one was laughing.

To make matters worse, they cut out the bonus again this year for everyone except the senior executives. They wanted to protect their executives so they would not migrate to jobs elsewhere. George warned them this would backfire--and as usual, he was right. To add

insult to injury, each day all employees had to pass by the executive parking lot and see all those new Mercedes and BMWs.

Later that day, Marie stormed into her supervisor's office and said, "We lost another one. She didn't even last seven days. I can't figure it out. She had great potential. I don't understand it. On her exit interview, she said no one communicated in this company, and she never saw anyone from top management get out of their office and show any concern and appreciation to us."

The CEO has finally decided to do something about the company.

You have been brought in from an outside consulting firm to provide recommendations on how to transform BOHICA Airline Company into a top-notch place to work.

- 1) What do you think the main problem is?
- 2) Do you think it is important to protect the senior executives from leaving?
- 3) What important element is missing from this story?
- 4) What is your turn-around plan for this company?

Can You Help Mary?

I am an employee (a waitress) for a corporate restaurant. In my store we have a general manager, and two assistant general managers. Last week one of the assistant general managers, Cathy, was fired. They claimed she was not fulfilling her duties.

The reason she was fired, our labor expense was too high and she failed to take proper action to do anything about it. She did not receive any warning prior to her firing that she was not "fulfilling her duties."

Also, her decisions had to be approved by her boss, the general manager. So how can she be blamed for not fulfilling her duties when her decisions had to be approved?

After working in this store for over two years I have seen many managers come and go. Cathy was the only one that stayed there through all of the corporate changes. She not only became the best manager we had, but also, a good friend. If I ever had a problem with payroll, customers, schedules, etc., I would wait to talk to her because she would try to solve the problem, not just tell me "it would be looked into."

To make matters worse, Cathy was replaced with a "friend" of a high rated corporate official, who has no experience in how to help employees or customers.

I am stuck in a work environment with three managers who don't know what they are doing. On many occasions they have asked employees how to solve a problem with computers, kitchen appliances, customers, etc.

I would like to inform corporate bosses of what a mistake they made in firing Cathy. At the very least, I would like to send a letter telling them what is really happening here at the restaurant now that Cathy is gone.

Many employees are interested in supporting this cause. I was wondering if you could give me any tips on how to handle this situation.

I love my job and my coworkers. The last thing I want to do is leave. Please help!

Dictator or Delegator

THE SITUATION

Jim, manager of the information systems technology department of a large commercial bank, is in over his head trying to keep up with the needs for new computer programs for of the bank's various departments. Then a request comes in from the accounting department for a centralized system that will instantaneously route billing and accounts receivable information from the bank's 300 branches to headquarters as soon as it is available. Jim decides to delegate the job of centralizing the various systems to Holly. Her credentials are excellent, and she's been with the bank for over a year now-certainly long enough to understand the rudiments of commercial banking.

The process of delegation is new to Jim. But his boss, who believes new challenges and opportunities motivate people to be more enthusiastic and productive, has been pushing Jim to delegate some of the responsibilities he's been handling to his staff. So Jim calls Holly in to discuss the assignment.

THE DIALOGUE

JIM: Holly, an assignment has come in that I'd like you to handle. I know you're relatively new to banking, but your background is perfect for this job.

HOLLY: Sounds exciting. I can hardly wait to hear what it is. I love new challenges - and frankly, what we've been doing lately in our area has been a bit routine.

JIM: Well, I don't think this will be boring. Here's the story: Accounting wants a new centralized system for tracking billing and accounts receivables. The branches do this independently. But now accounting wants the information to flow directly into its system. So we need to reprogram the systems so they automatically link up with the central accounting database. Do you think you can do this?

HOLLY: Yes, I think so. Who's in charge of the project in the accounting department?

JIM: Fred is. You may find it hard to track him down, though. He's a very busy man. He'll probably expect you to take on some of the responsibility for defining the project goals.

HOLLY: Well, I will resolve that problem when I get to it. How do you think I should approach the branch offices about changing their systems? And what's the budget for this project?

JIM: As far as I know, the budget is unlimited. Accounting has a top-management go-ahead to make this change. As for how to work with the branches, I'll leave that up to you. Here's a list of the branch managers. You can take it from there. This whole project is in your hands now. Report back to me in a couple of months to let me know how things are going.

HOLLY: One thing, Jim. When does accounting want this system up and running?

JIM: Six months from now, at the outside. Is this a problem?

HOLLY: I hope not, Jim. It really depends on how cooperative the branch managers are. Suppose they resist this centralization? After all, I'm young and relatively new here at the bank. Will I have any senior help on this project? In fact, will I have any staff help at all?

JIM: You'll be pretty much on your own. We'll give you as much staff help as possible. But I know you can handle any problems that come up. With your background, you'll do fine.

Questions:

1. What problems will Holly encounter at the branch level when she tries to gain their help and support?
2. Has Jim given Holly enough information to do this project? If yes, please explain. If no, why not?
3. Should Jim wait two months to find out how Holly is doing on this project? If no, what should the follow-up schedule be?

4. What questions should Holly ask about the specifics of this assignment before beginning the project?
5. How will these problems affect Holly's motivation to complete this assignment? Please explain.
6. Other questions, issues and concerns:

FUNNY STORIES AND EXERCISES

The Art of Raising Pigs

The following letter describes the humorous side of a pathetic situation. Can a hog farmer make more money by not raising pigs? Some think there is a profitable case to be made, as evidenced by the following letter sent to the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture:

Dear Sir:

My friend, Ed Peterson, over at Wells, Iowa, received a check for \$1,000 from the government for not raising pigs. So I want to go into the "not raising pigs" business next year. As I see it, the hardest part of this program will be keeping an accurate inventory of how many pigs I haven't raised.

My friend Peterson is very joyful about the future of the business. He has been raising pigs for 20 years or so, and the best he ever made on them was \$420 in 1968, until this year, when he got your check for \$1,000 for not raising pigs.

If I get \$1,000 for not raising 50 pigs, will I get \$2,000 for not raising 100?

I plan to operate on a small scale at first, holding myself down to about 4,000 pigs not raised, which will mean about \$80,000 the first year.

Now another thing, these pigs I will not raise will not eat 100,000 bushels of corn. I understand that you also pay farmers for not raising corn or wheat. Will I qualify for payments for not raising wheat and corn to not feed the 4,000 pigs I am not going to raise?

Also, I am considering the "not milking cows" business, so please send me any information on that, too. In view of these circumstances, you understand that I will be totally unemployed and therefore plan to file for unemployment and food stamps.

Patriotically yours,
John C. Cramer

New Restroom Policy

TO: All Company Employees

FROM: The Management

RE: New Restroom Policy

In the past, employees were permitted to make trips to the restroom under informal guidelines. Effective February 1, _____, a Restroom Trip Policy (RTP) will be established to provide a consistent method of accounting for each employee's restroom time and ensuring equal treatment of all employees.

Under this policy, a "Restroom Trip Bank" will be established for each employee. The first day of each month, employees will be given a Restroom Trip Credit of 20. Restroom Trip Credits can be accumulated from month to month.

Within two weeks, the entrances to all restrooms are being equipped with personnel identification stations and computer linked voice print recognition devices. Each employee must provide two copies of the voice prints (one normal, one under stress) to MIS before the end of January. The voice print recognition stations will be operational, but not restrictive; for the month of February, employees should acquaint themselves with the stations during that period.

If an employee's Restroom Trip Bank balance reaches 0, the doors to the restroom will not unlock for that employee's voice until the first of the next month. In addition, all restroom stalls are being equipped with the time paper roll retractors. If the stall is occupied for more than three minutes, an alarm will sound. Thirty seconds after the alarm sounds, the roll of paper in the staff will retract, the toilet will flush, and the stall door will open. If the stall remains occupied, your picture will be taken.

The pictures will then be posted on the Company bulletin board. This is being done to eliminate dilly-dallying in the restrooms. Anyone whose picture shows up three times will be immediately terminated.

If you have any questions about the new policy, please ask your supervisor.

Clothing Standards for Casual Friday

1. No cross-dressing! Yes, we are an equal opportunity employer and, yes, most of us enjoy an occasional cross dress, but this is something those in corporate America have always done in the privacy of their own homes. It is simply not appropriate for the workplace.
2. No stupid cowboy outfits. If you feel the need to do this, we will have openings at the branch offices in Abilene, Texas and Billings, Montana.
3. No wearing foundation garments on the outside of your clothes unless your name is Madonna.
4. No Hawaiian shirts, the one exception being those people entering the annual Don Ho look alike contest on July 15.
5. No halter tops or short shorts unless you have recently come from the Dallas Cowboy cheerleading squad... then, please, PLEASE, GO FOR IT!
6. No dressing up like a duck anytime, anywhere.
7. No accordions! You can be wearing a jacket and tie... you can be wearing a tuxedo... if you are caught bringing an accordion into work, you're gone and everything in your 401K is distributed among your fellow employees.
8. No bad toupees. If you are caught wearing a bad toupee and an accordion, you will be shot.
9. No cutoffs, no jeans with holes in them, no sandals, no bare feet, no T-shirts, especially Grateful Dead T-shirts, no colored shirts, no striped shirts, no red hair.

You've just been empowered. Have a nice day!

TEAM BUILDING EXERCISES

Alphabet Bingo

GOAL:

Come up with one item for every letter of the alphabet (A – Z). The team who successfully completes the task first wins.

PROCEDURES:

- This is a high energy and fun game I use either right before or after lunch.
- You need 15-20 people per team to make this work. Ten people per team would be the least number you would use.
- Make sure there are both women and men on the same team. Having ladies pocketbooks are an advantage.
- If you have a large group of people, you can create a timed competition between two teams.
- Explain the rules to the team(s).
- The facilitator acts as the final judge to accept or dismiss items collected for each letter of the alphabet.

RULES:

1. Don't start until I say, "Go."
2. Each team must appoint a recorder to write down items.
3. Each item has to be placed on a table and cannot be used twice. A coin cannot be used as both a "coin," and for the word "money."
4. You cannot use body parts (arms, legs, etc.).
5. You cannot leave the room to find items.
6. Items used have to be legitimate. (For the letter "Y," you cannot use a yellow Post-It note and say it represents the word "yellow." Team members cannot write down the letter "X" and get credit.)

OUTBRIEFING:

1. Did the exercise sound harder than it was?
2. Who was appointed recorder and why?
3. What would have made the process easier?
4. What strategy worked best for your team?
5. Which letters of the alphabet gave you the most difficulty?
6. What elements of teamwork applied in this exercise?
7. How did you feel working as a team?
8. What was the strangest thing you pulled out?
9. Who was the most dominant?
10. Was your attitude improved after you started working on this task?

TIME REQUIRED: 20-40 minutes

Co-Operation

OBJECTIVE: To co-operate

MATERIAL:

Prepare 12 3 x 5 cards with the letters and hyphen of the word "CO-OPERATION"

PROCEDURE:

Divide participants in to two groups and distribute the cards as follows:

Team 1: C – P R T O

Team 2: O O E A I N

Tell them in exactly these words: The winners are the first team to come up with a word using all their cards. The teams will struggle until they realize they can only win by working with the other team and combining their cards.

TIME REQUIRED: 5-15 minutes

SOURCE: Eric Garner

Crash in Piranha Valley

OBJECTIVE:

- To show people how to be creative and innovative
- Discover proper brainstorming techniques

MATERIAL:

A flip chart to write down ideas

PROCEDURE:

- An airplane has crashed in the jungles of South America.
- All passengers are safely on the shore and there is no way back to the airplane since the river is full of piranhas.
- The only item salvaged from the airplane is a box of paperclips.
- A friendly native tribe who loves to barter approaches you.
- Form groups and discuss all the possible uses of paperclips that could aid in this situation.

TIME REQUIRED: 15-20 minutes

Puzzle Pieces

OBJECTIVE:

- To work with someone you wouldn't normally work with (Randomly selected).
- To build peer relationships while searching for your puzzle partner.
- To drive interaction and sharpen communication skills.

MATERIALS:

Big jar with coordinating puzzle pieces

PROCEDURE:

- Have each person pick a puzzle piece from the jar upon entering the room.
- Once seated, instruct them to get a partner by finding the person whose puzzle piece fits with their's.
- They can spend five minutes getting to know their partner.
- Each person will then introduce their partner and share something new or unique about that person.

TIME REQUIRED: 10-15 minutes

Golf Ball in the Bag

OBJECTIVE:

Learn new ways of thinking.

KEY:

Take a reverse perspective from the ordinary (stand the problem on its head).

PROCEDURE:

Relate the following incident:

It was the 16th hole in the annual Pro Am Gold Tournament, and the tall, handsome newcomer had an excellent chance of winning. His iron shot fell just short of the green, giving him a good chance for a birdie. Smiling broadly, he strolled down the fairway, only to stop in dismay. His ball had rolled in to a small paper bag carelessly tossed on the ground by someone in the gallery.

If he removed the ball from the bag, it would cost him a penalty stroke. If he tried to hit the ball and the bag, he would lose control over the shot. What should he do?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What are some ways in which we would try to solve the problem?
2. What is the common element in our approach? (Ask them to state the problem. It will probably be to "get the ball out of the bag.")
3. What is an alternative way to state the problem? (Get the bag away from the ball?) Disclose the answer (set fire to the bag).
4. What are some areas in which such a principle (reversing the typical approach) could help us solve problems?

MATERIALS:

None, although a golf ball, paper sack, and matches would add realism to the illustration.

TIME REQUIRED: 10 minutes

Scavenger Hunt

SET UP:

A scavenger hunt usually means having team members search for a specific list of items. An alternative to that theme is to create a treasure map that leads to clues and eventually the grand prize. Suggestions for both methods are provided. But first you have to decide what kind of contest you want your guests to participate in. That will partially determine your set up.

SITE:

This game may be held in your home; however, variations can include finding items that must be collected at parks, offices, churches, or stores, meaning guests would have to drive around town. Another option is to host a Mall scavenger hunt; or guests must collect items found only at a _____. When finished, return to your home, office, or a restaurant.

DECORATIONS:

Use a map theme for decorations: create and hang North, South, East, and West arrows; use crepe paper to draw the equator around a room; hang maps on the walls. In addition to using table cloths or fabric with map prints on them for table coverings, you can use a variety of hunting items for centerpieces and table decorations such as compasses, spy glasses, shovels, and treasure trunks.

HUNT:

Print instructions on map parchment-type paper, burn the edge of the paper for an extra touch, roll the paper up, and tie it with straw or twine. Have everyone open their maps at the same time

Include a list of items guests must find, such as:

<u>Indoors:</u>	1 stone	1 fast food napkin
1 cooking utensil	1 garden tool	1 paper-wrapped straw
1 envelope	3 different leaves	
1 vegetable		
1 fruit	<u>Location specific (e.g. Mall):</u>	
<u>Outdoors:</u>	1 Mall map	
1 acorn	1 bank brochure	

Have members return to a specific location by a designated time.

FOLLOW CLUES:

Draw a blank map for guests to fill in with words or information collected on the hunt. Create a list of riddles or clues (that are on the map, or replace the map with a list) for guests to follow, leading them from one place to another.

At each location, place another clue or have an item the team must collect (e.g. This is where clothes dry best – inside the dryer have a clothes pin or on a clothes line have a bag with slips of paper with a clue to the next location).

PRIZES:

Decide some categories in advance (like first to finish, most creative excuse for not getting an item, best substitute, etc.) then present the awards at the end of the hunt.

Terrorist Toxic Explosive Situation

OBJECTIVE:

To provide an opportunity for planning and experiencing teamwork; and to provide a live forum for analyzing its pre-requisites, processes, and consequences.

MATERIAL:

- Two coffee cans, and enough popcorn kernels to fill one can halfway. I use two metal coffee cans, one painted red, and the other green. Select a green can for the "safe" one; a red can for the toxic one.
- Six to eight pieces of 7½-foot-long rope, and shorter pieces of rope
- One bicycle tire tube
- Clothes pins
- Rubber bands
- Two 1-inch-wide dowels or broomsticks, approximately 36 inches long
- Plastic bags

NON-ESSENTIAL MATERIAL:

- Glue
- Random lengths of string
- Toilet plunger

These items serve no real purpose and are designed to create confusion.

PROCEDURE:

- Briefly explain to the group how important teams and teamwork are in contemporary organizations. Ask them to identify the characteristics of highly effective teams. Explain that effective teams pay close of the bank's various departments attention to both their task and their process (e.g., how they work together to accomplish their objective).
- Form participants into groups of six to eight people.

- Move them to another room, where there is a 10-foot diameter circle marked off with string.
- Place the two cans in the circle. Put the other material outside the circle.
- Distribute the instruction sheet to each person, and start the clock running.
- Administer the rules closely. Remove anyone from the exercise that crosses the circle.

IMPORTANT NOTE: There is no one correct way for teams to decontaminate the material. However, most groups end up using the two sticks, bicycle tube, and robe as a lasso. Allow chaos theory to dominate.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Was your team successful?
2. What did your team do that helped it succeed?
3. What did your team members do that caused it to have difficulties?
4. What did you learn from this exercise that you could apply on the job?

TIME REQUIRED: 45-60 minutes



Terrorist Toxic Explosive Situation **Group Instructions**

BACKGROUND:

A can of highly toxic material (popcorn) has contaminated a circle approximately 10 feet in diameter. The toxic area extends to the ceiling. If the poisonous popcorn is not transferred to a safe container for decontamination, the toxic popcorn will contaminate and destroy the population of the entire city. The toxic material is estimated to have a safe life of exactly 30 minutes before it explodes. Obviously, there is insufficient time to contact authorities and evacuate the city. Therefore, the lives of thousands of people are in your hands.

Inside the circle you will find two cans. One (unsafe) container is about half full of the toxic popcorn. The other (safe) container is available for decontamination.

OBJECTIVE:

You must find a way to safely transfer the toxic popcorn from the unsafe container to the safe container, using only the materials provided to you. For your group, this includes a piece of rope for each person (each approximately 7 ½ feet long), a bicycle tire tube, and a variety of other materials.

RULES:

1. NO participant may cross the plane of the circle with any part of the body. If this occurs, they must be taken to the hospital immediately (removed from play) and they may not participate in any way from then on. The group is responsible for the safety of all its members.
2. NO participant may sacrifice him/herself to aid in the transfer of popcorn.
3. NO spills are allowed, or the popcorn will explode.
4. Participants may ONLY use the materials provided. However, they can be used in any way.
5. The popcorn will not spread its toxicity to the safe can, the ropes, the tube, or the instruction-giver. The participants have NO protection inside the imaginary cylinder created by the 10-foot diameter rope.

6. The safe container may move anywhere in or outside of the circle. The unsafe container must stay inside the circle, and not be moved more than one foot from its center.

7. Remember, the popcorn **MUST** be transferred within 30 minutes, or there will be a tremendous disaster.

Space Mission to the Moon Exercise
Individual Worksheet

INSTRUCTIONS:

You are a member of a space crew originally scheduled to rendezvous with a space ship on the lighted surface of the moon. However, due to mechanical difficulties, your spacecraft was forced to land at a spot 320 miles from the rendezvous point. During landing, much of the equipment aboard was damaged. Since your survival depends on reaching the spacecraft, the most critical items available must be chosen for the 320-mile trip.

The 15 items listed below were left intact and undamaged after the crash landing. Your task is to rank them in terms of their importance to your crew in allowing them to reach the rendezvous point. Place the number "1" by the most important item, "2" by the second most important, and so on through number "15", the least important. You have 15 minutes to complete this phase of the exercise.

-
- | | |
|-------|--------------------------------------------|
| _____ | Cigarette lighter |
| _____ | Food concentrate |
| _____ | 50 feet of nylon rope |
| _____ | Parachute silk |
| _____ | Portable heating unit |
| _____ | Two 9 mm Beretta pistols |
| _____ | One case dehydrated milk |
| _____ | Two 100-pound tanks of oxygen |
| _____ | Stellar map (of the Moon's constellation) |
| _____ | Life raft |
| _____ | Magnetic compass |
| _____ | Ten gallons of water |
| _____ | Signal flares |
| _____ | First Aid kit containing injection needles |
| _____ | Solar-powered FM receiver-transmitter |

Space Mission to the Moon Exercise Group Worksheet

INSTRUCTIONS:

This is an exercise that helps in group decision-making. Your group is to employ the method of group consensus in reaching its decision. This means each group member must agree upon the prediction for each of the 15 survival items before it becomes a part of the group decision. Consensus is difficult to reach. Therefore, not every ranking will meet with everyone's complete approval. Try, as a group, to make each ranking one with which all group members can at least partially agree. Here are some guides to use in reaching consensus:

1. Avoid arguing for your own individual judgments. Approach the task on the basis of logic, not emotion.
2. Avoid changing your mind only in order to reach agreement and avoid conflict. Support only solutions with which you are able to agree with.
3. Avoid "conflict-reducing" techniques such as majority vote, consensus, averaging, or trading decisions.
4. View differences of opinion as helpful rather than as a hindrance in decision-making.

_____	Cigarette lighter
_____	Food concentrate
_____	50 feet of nylon rope
_____	Parachute silk
_____	Portable heating unit
_____	Two 9 mm Beretta pistols
_____	One case dehydrated milk
_____	Two 100-pound tanks of oxygen
_____	Stellar map (of Moon constellation)
_____	Life raft
_____	Magnetic compass
_____	Ten gallons of water
_____	Signal flares
_____	First aid kit containing injection needles
_____	Solar-powered FM receiver-transmitter

Space Mission to the Moon Exercise **Direction Sheet for Scoring**

The group recorder will assume the responsibility for directing the scoring.

Individuals will:

- Score the net differences between their answers and the correct answers. For example, if the answer was 9, and the correct answer was 12, the net difference is 3. Three becomes the score for that particular item.
- Total these scores for an individual score.
- Next, total all individual scores and divide by the number of participants to arrive at an average individual score.
- Score the net difference between group worksheet answers and the correct answers.
- Total these scores for a group score.
- Compare the average individual score with the group score.

Rating Scale:

0 – 20	Excellent
20 – 30	Good
30 – 40	Average
40 – 50	Fair
Over 50	Poor

Space Exercise to the Moon - Answer Sheet

<i>Reason</i>	<i>Correct Order</i>
No oxygen	15# Cigarette lighter
Can live for some time without food	4# Food concentrate
For travel over rough terrain	6# 50 feet of nylon rope
Used for carrying other items	8# Parachute silk
Lighted side of Moon is warm	13# Portable heating unit
Some use for propulsion	11# Two 9mm Beretta pistols
Needs H2O	12# One case of dehydrated milk
No air on the Moon	1# Two 100-lb. tanks of oxygen
Needed for navigation	3# Stellar map (on the Moon's constellation)
Some value for shelter or carrying	9# Life raft
Moon's magnetic field is different from Earth's	14# Magnetic compass
You can't live long without this	2# Ten gallons of water
No oxygen	10# Signal flares
First aid kit might be needed but needles are useless	7# First aid kit containing injection needles
Emergency communications	5# Solar-powered FM receiver-transmitter

Torpedo Weapons Loading Exercise

OBJECTIVE:

This is a timed exercise where individuals are placed on two teams to complete a task. The objective is to design and construct a device/platform to safely catch a torpedo (egg) from an elevated crane (tripod). One of the goals of the exercise is to evaluate how people work together to accomplish the objective.

An egg is substituted for the torpedo, soft or hardboiled. The egg is suspended from the tripod approximately three to four feet from the ground. Once the team completes the structure, the string is cut allowing the egg to fall, hopefully without breaking.

The group may consist of 8-14 individuals. Split individuals into two teams - 1) Design team and 2) Construction team. Only members of the Design team may participate in the design, and only members of the Construction team may participate in the construction phase.

MATERIAL:

The facilitator prepares the crane in advance of the exercise. Construct a tripod out of three dowels, broomsticks, or comparable material. Dowels can be purchased from a local hardware or arts and crafts store. Place the egg inside a mesh bag. Mesh netting can be obtained from a fabric store, or use an onion or potato sack material. In lieu of a mesh bag, you can use a plastic baggie, sock, or hosiery. The bag and the egg are suspended from the tripod with a piece of string. In lieu of a tripod, you can use any device that can suspend the egg three to four feet off the ground.

NOTES:

Provide the material and price list to participants. Do not let participants see the tripod device until you begin timing. The Design and Construction Teams must purchase the items from the facilitator.

The total cost of the project must not exceed \$90,000. Participants cannot use any other items than what is provided by the facilitator. You can decide if you want to pick a team leader for each group, or let a natural leader(s) arise to the occasion.

There is no "right" way to conduct the exercise. As an added variation, you may appoint one person to act as an "observer" and allow them to provide feedback at the end of the exercise.

Time Required: 25-35 minutes

Torpedo Weapons Loading Exercise **Instructions**

BACKGROUND:

You are the skipper of the USS Snarley, a submarine located at Mayport Naval Center. You are preparing to deploy on a six-month cruise. During the weapon loading phase, the loading crane has jammed, suspending a highly explosive torpedo 30 feet over the loading dock. The only feasible solution to the problem is to build a structure capable of safely catching the torpedo without setting off a detonation that will obliterate you, your crew, and the submarine.

OBJECTIVES:

Your group must be divided into two teams – a Design team and a Construction team. Your task is to work together to design and construct a structure that meets budget requirement and complies with government safety regulations. However, only members of the design team may participate in the design, and only members of the construction team may participate in the construction phase.

The total cost of the project is not to exceed \$90,000.

The structure must successfully catch the cargo container with no breakage.

The structure must be built using only the resources provided (price list is attached), and it must be freestanding.

No part of the structure can extend upward more than 12 inches from the surface of the platform and the platform cannot be moved.

Resources may not be altered, tested, or utilized until the construction phase officially begins.

Any resource used and then abandoned will still be charged to the budget.

The team will have one opportunity to try one plan.

You have a total of 30 minutes to design and construct your structure.

Your facilitator will advise you when time begins.

Torpedo Weapons Loading Exercise
Price List

Large Plastic Bags	\$ 50,000 per bag
Small Plastic Bags	\$ 10,000 per bag
Paper	\$ 12,000 per sheet
Rice	\$ 10,000 per bag
Plates	\$ 10,000 per plate
Scissors	\$ 10,000 each
Large Cups	\$ 10,000 each
Small Cups	\$ 5,000 each
Sponges	\$ 10,000 each
Cotton Foam	\$ 5,000 per bag
Pencils	\$ 5,000 each
Tissue	\$ 1,000 per foot
Cotton Balls	\$ 1,000 per ball
Cheese Cloth	\$ 2,000 per piece
Paper Clips	\$ 2,000 each
Rubber Bands	\$ 1,500 each
Nails	\$ 1,200 each
String	\$ 500 per section
Dental Floss	\$ 500 per box
Nut	\$ 500 each
Masking Tape	\$ 100 per inch
Skewers	\$ 50 each
Coffee filters	\$ 300 each
Balloons	\$ 500 each
Forks	\$ 1,000 each
Push Pins	\$ 100 each
Straws	\$ 1,000 each
Clothes Pins	\$ 1,000 each

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Greg is a military veteran and served on active duty for 20 years. Prior to his departure, he was a senior consultant to the U.S. Army Surgeon General. He has received awards including the Legion of Merit from the U.S. Army and the Order of Military Medical Merit. He is listed in *Who's Who of Professional Speaking* from the National Speakers Association and holds both a B.S. and M.S. degree in Personnel Management.

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